



Key Components *of a* Childcare Licensing System

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Introduction

COVID changed the way we work—including how childcare licensing agencies function. The pandemic showcased the need for new ways to serve the public, shifting from in-person to online services. Agencies adapted to remote work, multiple locations, and for some, web-based workflows. Childcare licensing agencies joined other regulatory agencies in feeling pressure from all levels of government to modernize, even receiving funds to make that happen. These modernization funds encouraged regulatory agencies to digitally transform their agency's systems.

But keeping up with modernization efforts means additional work for childcare licensing agencies, not to mention understanding current technology and services like StateRAMP, cloud hosting and more. And childcare licensing officials already face labor-intensive work—including checking off many requirements for providers.

Despite these challenges, the safety of children remains paramount. Childcare licensing agencies need to confront aging technology and embrace transformation.

We describe a new way to modernize your agency—moving step by step through an agency transformation process. Five phases take you from crafting your agency's mission and processes to serving as a pillar agency for other states to emulate.



Agency Transformation

AGENCY TRANSFORMATION MODERNIZES your agency's approach to implementing a new system. The transformation involves your agency moving through different levels of growth and development towards an optimal agency; the process of transformation enables your agency to better run, grow and adapt. And because your external environment always brings changes, agency transformation involves continual evaluation of your system.

Why phases?

Agency transformation starts with your agency establishing the mission and vision for your agency. You also identify key stakeholders and gather feedback from your licensees. As you move through different phases of development, you gradually re-engineer your business processes—while supporting your agency's workflow.

Your agency standardizes processes, promotes online self-service and embraces digital communication. Eventually, you move towards a model agency where your agency focuses on gathering and analyzing complex data and measuring performance.

Agency transformation gives your agency a pathway to:

- Make changes gradually—or dynamically.
- Re-engineer business processes.
- Track predefined milestones.
- Alleviate financial and staffing impacts.
- Make big process changes with a plan.
- Set a goal.

Why Choose Agency Transformation?

Agency Transformation gives your agency a format for how to approach modernization. COVID highlighted the growing gap between the public's regulatory needs and government service delivery. The pandemic also disrupted state agency office-bound, tenured-centered workplaces. The technology and experience to solve these problems exists today. Your agency needs a strategic approach to transform employee engagement, public safety and licensee satisfaction.



What Makes Childcare Licensing Different?

Unique Challenges

Childcare licensing agencies face unique challenges—from public and government scrutiny to handling a system overburdened with a lack of providers. Along with this, agencies face a daunting list of childcare regulations they must ensure that providers meet. And most importantly these agencies must ensure the health, safety and well-being of children in childcare facilities. Some of the unique challenges of childcare licensing agencies include:

- 1. Shortage of providers:** The childcare licensing industry faces a tremendous shortage of providers—across the country. Providers must overcome strict barriers to entry, meeting multiple and varied requirements, depending on the type of specialized care they provide. In addition, all staff, from janitors to managers, must go through rigorous background checks to ensure a safe environment for the kids.
- 2. Requirements for licensure:** Each specialized license type must meet a rich source of requirements—or you place children at risk. As part of this, these providers go through in-depth inspections to ensure compliance with the many statutes.
- 3. Speed of licensure:** Childcare licensing agencies work quickly to authorize or decline childcare providers, as demand for their services remains high. Working efficiently helps children get the care they need as soon as possible—and with the right provider.
- 4. Visibility of agency:** Of any licensing agency, those that serve children see their names in the media when things go awry. Death and serious injury reports, for example, spotlight any weaknesses in the system—from missing children to child abuse.



Operational Differences

Some of the unique functionalities for childcare licensing include:

- **Background checks:** Every single staff member at a childcare provider site needs a background check.
- **In-depth inspections:** The process of inspecting or surveying childcare providers sometimes means checking off hundreds of requirements. And these inspections sometimes take days. Remote off-line surveys must capture signatures, duration, as well as geo-tagging for locations.
- **Corrective Action Plans (CAP):** When providers fail the inspection process, they must tackle a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) to make amends.
- **Robust case management:** Agencies require robust case management capabilities—from recording complaints to taking legal action.
- **Provider portals:** Portals enable agencies to support multiple forms of file and document uploads to meet requirements.
- **Geographic Information Systems (GIS):** GIS tools help track inspections/surveys for compliance and safety inspections.
- **Powerful reporting:** Accurate and intuitive reporting helps track providers.

Model Agencies

Important functionalities and features that ensure a childcare licensing agency works best to protect the public include:

- Connecting an agency's business process to the regulations they must meet.
- Integrating an agency's workflow with a customer-facing portal.
- Measuring an agency's performance and making needed changes process workloads.

Capacity Building

IN CAPACITY BUILDING, phase 1 of the agency transformation process, your childcare agency establishes clear objectives, along with a mission to guide operations. You also evaluate your agency's leadership capacity and staff performance. And you pinpoint your key project stakeholders.

Internal and external surveys during this phase give you valuable feedback from your frontline staff and licensees.

When you finish building capacity, your agency benefits from:

- A feasible, high-level plan to standardize your processes.
- Staff to meet your agency's transformation needs.
- A plan, timeline and costs to achieve transformation.
- Feedback from internal and external surveys to guide transformation efforts.



Process Standardization

IN PROCESS STANDARDIZATION, phase 2, your childcare agency defines and standardizes your processes. Consistent processes for your staff help your agency measure performance, improve continuously and build online services. In addition, these standardized processes ensure your agency adheres to the law.

Ways to standardize your processes:



Process Guides

Process guides lead your childcare agency through your business processes—one step at a time. These online guides keep track of your progress in a business process, even marking where staff leave off. These guides ensure that your staff finish each step in the process, improving efficiency and accuracy.

- **Segments:** Process guides break down the process, even indicating how to complete a process with exceptions, like a license application with missing documentation; the process guides lead your staff down the “happy” or normal path, but also down the path of exceptions. Segments enable your team members to see only their repetitive steps within a process.



- **Interactive:** Your staff interacts with the steps in a business process guide; steps sometimes include links, for example, to a specific screen for entering information.
- **Regulations:** Process guides help point your staff to internal resources and documents that relate to regulations.
- **Updates:** Use the guides as a checklist for your agency's management, flagging those items that need a manager's attention. Green check marks let staff see those checked off items in the business process.

Interfaces

Interfaces to and from third-party applications support data exchange between your agency and third parties. Seamlessly exchange data for online payments, criminal record checks, information updates and exam scheduling. Interface with other applications with a documented API.

- CCWIS
- CJIS
- State criminal data repositories
- Payment processors
- Continuing education administrators

Ad hoc Reporting

Ad hoc reporting enables you to report on anything you enter into your regulatory software system. Create a report on the spot for Freedom of Information Act requests, for example. Then save that ad hoc report for others to use.



Customer Service

IN PHASE 3 OF THE agency transformation process, Customer Service, your agency moves all processes online. You transition to a modern, paperless office, offering 24x7 agency service availability.

By making the shift to online services you seamlessly support your licensees virtually. And by moving to online services, you also help support your staff to work virtually—and in multiple locations.

Online Self-service

Your customer service enhancements include online self-service portals for applications, permits and licenses—and for the easy upload of corrective action plans (CAPs). Your agency benefits from improved accuracy and completeness of the applications and renewals processed. The citizen portal also enables licensees to easily update their information, such as a change of address.

Customer portals help support the following processes:

- Complaints
- Renewals
- Applications
- Verifications
- Updates



Third-party Integration

Along with processing licenses and renewals, your online system integrates with third parties to facilitate credential management. For example, when your agency needs to run a background check for a potential licensee, you integrate seamlessly with third-party providers, like state and federal databases.

Examples of third-party integrations include:

- Payment processors
- Background checks
- Fingerprinting services



Integrated Service

IN PHASE 4 of the agency transformation process, Integrated Service embraces digital functionality and communication. Your agency's online customer portal provides an avenue for two-way communication between your staff and your customers. Your in-the-field surveys and inspections support working offline, with information uploaded later when you go online.

Workflow Management

Childcare cases involve a lot of back-and-forth communication between your agency and providers. Workflow management supports that flow of work, routing work efficiently. Configure your system to automate every step in your workflow process, from reviewing new applications to approving licenses, along with requirements tracking, generating notices and managing and tracking complaints.

Work Queues

Work queues support the communication of all team members. With workflow management, work gets assigned to team members; when staff view their work queue, they see their assignments, along with due dates. When needed, managers add and assign new work items.

Document Management

Document management capabilities enable your staff to capture, manage and share documents electronically. With document management, upload any type of document and store the document with a record, including original applications, correspondence and supporting documentation, like photos or videos. Your agency saves money and time, freeing up important resources to better serve the public.

Document Queue

Within a document management system, documents can be manually or automatically uploaded to a document queue. The queue enables your agency to view those documents and then store them with the associated record.

Provider Portal

The provider portal gives your providers a one-stop shop to interact with your agency—from asking questions, to applying for exceptions and renewals.

- **Two-way communication:** The provider portal supports a flow of questions and answers between your agency and your providers.
- **Provider updates:** The portal enables your providers to update their information, like address, staff and location changes—without needing the help of your staff.
- **Text alerts:** Licensees receive text alerts regarding their application status, prompting them to act, if needed.
- **Virtual wallet:** Licensees receive a digital license to conveniently store in their mobile digital wallet.

Document Retention

Your agency knows the importance of storing the emails to and from providers; email management makes the process simple, automatically tracking and storing email with the licensee's information. Document retention helps meet your department's document retention mandates.

Model Agency

IN PHASE 5, MODEL AGENCY, your agency offers a model for others to emulate on their path to modernization. Your agency adds tools that measure performance, resolve and implement process improvements, and demonstrate value to stakeholders.

Adding this analytics layer to your childcare system gives your agency automatic data collection and insights. Other advanced functions like batch processing come online and continue improving during this phase.

Your agency's performance center includes the following tools:

KPI Tracker

Your agency now tracks key performance indicators; these include tracking cases, like death and serious injuries. You measure the time to process an application—along with other bottlenecks in your agency's business processes. The analytics drive your agency towards continuous improvement.

Complex Reporting

With the scarcity of childcare, complex reporting helps your agency understand where you need support. View a report related to bed availability, for example, to quickly connect individuals to available providers.



System Configuration

Configurable licensing systems enable your childcare agency to adapt to ever changing needs and workflows brought on by legislative changes and more.

Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicator reports give you a snapshot of the performance of your agency's staff and processes. When integrated with Business Intelligence reporting the KPI data appears in a visually rich way; drill into the data to track and improve upon indicators, like business process duration, project deadlines and staff productivity.

Use the following KPI reports to gain insight into your processes and better protect the lives of children.

- Application processing time
- Renewals submitted
- Caseload analysis
- Services by geography
- Count of providers
- Count of services
- Complaint status
- Death and serious injuries





Helping Government Agencies Run, Grow and Adapt

GL Solutions delivers customized software solutions for government agencies, helping them modernize, digitize, and automate their regulatory software systems and increase their capacity to serve the public.

Montana-based GL Solutions, founded in 1997 by government regulatory experts, offers enterprise software for scores of licensing agencies.

Empowering Agencies from Alaska to Connecticut

State agencies from Alaska to Connecticut use GL Suite, GL Solutions' configurable childcare licensing and enforcement SaaS solution to improve processes and outcomes.

GL Suite helps agencies:

- Support field inspectors and remote workers
- Interface with databases
- Ensure public safety
- Automate business processes
- Adapt to new requirements

Focusing on Childcare Licensing

Human Services agencies (including departments of behavioral health and departments of children, youth and families) use GL Suite to ensure compliance and better protect children and the most vulnerable.

Offering You Industry Expertise

For more information or to request a free demo, call (800) 930-1193, email hello@glsolutions.com or visit our website at www.glsolutions.com.